

3.
THIRD

R E P O R T

OF THE

COMMITTEE

OF

THE SOCIETY

FOR THE

MITIGATION AND GRADUAL ABOLITION
OF SLAVERY

THROUGHOUT THE BRITISH DOMINIONS.

Read at a Special Meeting of the Members and Friends of the Society, held (on the 21st of December 1825) for the purpose of petitioning Parliament on the Subject of Slavery.

WITH NOTES AND AN APPENDIX.

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1826.

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At a General Meeting of the Members and Friends of the Society, held at Freemasons' Hall, on Wednesday, December 21, 1825, for the purpose of petitioning Parliament for the Abolition of Colonial Slavery;

WILLIAM WILBERFORCE, Esq. in the Chair;

The Report having been read, it was unanimously Resolved as follows:—

I. That the substance of the Report now read be printed without delay, under the revision of the Committee; and that they be requested to circulate it as widely as possible.

II. That this Meeting desire to express their satisfaction with the Resolutions on the subject of Colonial Slavery, which, on the motion of Mr. Canning, were unanimously adopted by Parliament, and which were to the following effect, namely:

“ That it is expedient to adopt effectual and decisive measures for ameliorating the condition of the Slave population of his Majesty's Colonies.

“ That through a determined and vigorous, but at the same time judicious and temperate, enforcement of such measures, this House looks forward to a progressive improvement in the character of the slave population, such as may prepare them for the participation in those civil rights and privileges which are enjoyed by other classes of his Majesty's subjects.

“ That this House is anxious for the accomplishment of these purposes at the earliest period that may be consistent with the welfare of the slaves themselves, the well-being of the Colonies, and a fair and equitable consideration of the interests of all parties concerned therein.”

That this Meeting desire further to express their high sense of the ability promptitude, and zeal, with which, as appears from Earl Bathurst's official correspondence with the Colonies, his Majesty's Ministers have laboured to carry these Parliamentary Resolutions into effect; and they deeply lament that the opposition of the Colonial authorities has hitherto succeeded in almost wholly frustrating their benevolent purposes and efforts.

That the various official documents on the subject of Slavery, and the treatment of Slaves, recently laid before Parliament by his Majesty's Ministers, afford additional and incontestable evidence of the injustice and cruelty of the system of Slavery now prevailing in the Colonies, and render desperate the hope of its extinction, or even of its effectual mitigation, without the direct and authoritative interference of the Imperial Legislature.

That from the same authentic sources of information, this Meeting have learnt with regret, though not with surprise, that the Colonial Legislatures have either treated the recorded wishes of Parliament, and the beneficent recommendations and urgent remonstrances of his Majesty's Government with neglect, or have met them with decided opposition; and that even in those Colonies where attempts have been made to frame an ameliorated Slave Code, the new enactments manifest the same substantial disregard of the most sacred principles of justice which characterised the old; that the existing laws, in their practical administration, evidently afford no effectual protection to the Slaves, and have been made, on many recent occasions, an instrument of the most grievous judicial oppression; and that the general treatment of the Slaves continues to exhibit the same harsh and disgusting effects of the domestic despotism prevailing in the Colonies, which first excited the indignant feelings of the British Public, and which should now lead to a fixed determination, on the part of every individual who values British freedom, and the blessings of Christianity, to do his utmost to prevent their continuance.

That this Meeting are further anxious to record their conviction that this unjust and immoral system, as it exists in the British Colonies, derives great support from those commercial regulations, which, by conferring bounties and protecting duties on the produce of Slave Labour, not only materially enhance its price to the British consumer, but increase the miseries of the Slaves, and render their liberation more difficult.

That if called upon by Parliament to contribute to the same, or even to a larger extent, for the purpose of extinguishing Slavery, than they now pay for its support, this Meeting would cheerfully obey the call; but that to the existing regulations of the Colonial Trade, they entertain insuperable objections; because, while these regulations violate the recognised principles of sound commercial policy, and impose on the nation a heavy pecuniary burden for the maintenance of Slavery, they tend to counteract the hope of its reformation, they serve to aggravate and perpetuate its evils, and they involve the people of this country still more deeply in the guilt of upholding it.

That it appears to this Meeting to be their bounden duty, and that of every individual who acknowledges the claims of humanity and justice, to promote, with all their influence, the fulfilment of the pledge given by the Government and Parliament in 1823, on this subject; and for that purpose to lose no time in earnestly and respectfully petitioning both Houses of Parliament, that they will be pleased to take the great work of Colonial Reformation into their own hands; and, in accordance with their own Resolutions, and the wishes and prayers of the nation at large, to bring the state of Slavery itself to the earliest practicable termination in every part of his Majesty's dominions.

III. That the Petitions to both Houses of Parliament, grounded on the above Resolutions, which have now been read, be adopted as the Petitions of this Meeting; and that they be left at the Freemasons' Tavern, and at such other places as the Committee of the Anti-Slavery Society may appoint, in order to receive the signatures of all who concur in their prayer.

IV. That his Royal Highness the Duke of Gloucester, whose unavoidable absence on this occasion the Meeting lament, and whose invaluable services they are desirous of gratefully recording, be respectfully requested to present the Petition to the House of Lords; and Mr. Fowell Buxton that to the Commons.

V. That this Meeting eagerly embrace the present opportunity both of presenting their heartfelt acknowledgments to their revered Vice-President, William Wilberforce, Esq., for his gratifying attendance on this day, and for his conduct in the chair; and of testifying their deep sense of the services, which, during a long and arduous parliamentary life, he has rendered to his country, and to the world at large; and especially of that indefatigable, but tempered zeal, with which he has so unceasingly and successfully consecrated his powerful talents and fascinating eloquence to the vindication and relief of suffering humanity.

THIRD REPORT.

SINCE the publication of the Second Report of the Society, read in this place on the 30th April last, a large mass of most important information, on the subject of Colonial Slavery, has been laid before Parliament. A digest of the most material parts of this information has been published, under the title of "The Slave Colonies of Great Britain, or a Picture of Negro Slavery drawn by the Colonists themselves." As this pamphlet has been largely circulated, it will not be necessary to enter into a detail of the statements which it contains, or of the fresh horrors which it develops. It has admitted us to a near view of the interior of society in one of the slave colonies, Berbice, where the Fiscal had been so attentive to his duty as to preserve some record, though an imperfect one, of the causes of complaint, on the part of the slaves, which came before him. We are not to suppose that the slave system in this colony is marked by features of peculiar atrocity. The presumption, on the contrary, is rather in favour of its comparative lenity, because it is one of the few slave-colonies in which the population does not diminish. We have unfortunately no similar disclosures from any other of those colonies. But when we consider what a mass of suffering is laid open to our view in the account which has reached us from this single colony, containing only 23,000 slaves, being about a fortieth part of the whole slave population; how frightfully would that mass have been augmented had we received a similar report of the remaining 800,000! Over *their* sufferings the veil of oblivion has been drawn. Of *them* no record has been preserved. We may imagine, indeed, what they must have been, from the glimpse which has been afforded us in the returns from Berbice; but the full amount of their horrors can now be known only to Him whose eye makes inquisition for the blood of the innocent, and by whom not one sigh of the oppressed is disregarded.

Revolting, in every point of view, as is the delineation, contained in these papers, of the state of British colonial slavery, as it exists in law and in practice, there is at least this advantage attending the melancholy detail, that it serves amply to confirm the view of the nature and effects of that cruel system which has been sanctioned and circulated by this Society, making *their* statements to appear even cold and tame in the comparison*.

* Compare, for example, with the recent returns from the colonies, the statements contained in Mr. Wilberforce's "Appeal;" in "Negro Slavery as it exists in the United States, and in the Colonies of the West Indies, especially in Jamaica;" in the *Appendix* to the "Debate" of 15th May 1823; in the "Brief View of the Nature and Effects of Negro Slavery;" in the *tracts* entitled "Negro Slavery," Nos. 1 to 15; and in the Reports of the Anti-Slavery Society; and it will be clearly seen how every assertion which this Society have sanctioned is far more than borne out by the official communications from the colonies themselves.

These parliamentary documents are particularly valuable, as exemplifying the unchanged spirit of colonial legislation on the subject of slavery. The local legislatures have refused, without a single exception, to comply even with the moderate requisitions of his Majesty's Ministers*, as these are embodied in the Order in Council for Trinidad; and the colonists, generally, exult in the refusal, encouraging each other to persevere in the same contumacious course. Their tone of secure and triumphant irony is remarkable. "We beg you to observe," says the editor of one of their newspapers—and we give the passage only as an illustration of the prevailing spirit—"We beg you to observe, that not one of the unconquered colonies" (meaning the colonies having legislatures of their own) "have had the *civility* to comply with Earl Bathurst's wishes, notwithstanding he informed them, *in the most earnest and feeling manner, of the serious extent of the disappointment which his Majesty's Government would experience if they rejected his application. We sympathize most sincerely with his Lordship on the unexpected event.*"

Attempts, it is true, have been made, by several of the colonial legislatures, to ameliorate their slave codes; and they boast of their new laws as models of wise and beneficent legislation. But it has been shewn, by the digest of these laws already laid before the public, that, vaunted as they have been, they are nevertheless an outrage on every just principle of legislation; and afford, at the very moment they profess to protect the slave, a decisive proof of his utter want of effective protection, and of the depth of his legal degradation†. And

* They are justly called *moderate*; for they are only the *first step* in the progress of the *gradual* emancipation to which Parliament has pledged itself. The West Indians cannot say that that progress has not been sufficiently slow. Three years have nearly elapsed, and this very first graduation in the scale of reform has not yet been taken, except in one colony; and even there its adoption has been compulsory. The succeeding steps, it is to be hoped, will follow each other more rapidly.

† This point was happily illustrated by Mr. Brougham, in the speech he made on the occasion of this meeting. "Previos to 1824," he remarked, "there was no law in Barbadoes by which cruelty to a slave, or even the torture, or mutilation, or dismemberment of a slave, was punishable. In 1824, however, a clause was introduced into the new act to the following effect; and here let me beg the attention of the meeting, and they will at once perceive the nature and extent of the protection afforded to the wretched slave, even by this last and best edition of the Barbadoes slave code.—'Whereas it is highly expedient to restrain owners, and others having the government and the direction of slaves, from indiscriminately, wantonly, and cruelly exercising the power they possess over slaves; and as the cruelty of punishment by flogging necessarily depends much more on the manner of inflicting it than upon the number of stripes, it is therefore most condncive to the ends of humanity' [not to limit the number of lashes, but] 'to trust to the discretion and good feelings of the justices before whom complaints shall be made.' Here, then, are the wretched slaves not protected by law, but turned over to the 'humanity' first of the master and his delegates, and then of the justices (they themselves always slave-owners), before whom complaints shall be made! It is further enacted, and I beseech you to mark the extent of protection extended to the Negroes by this 'wise' and 'salutary' measure. It is enacted, that if any person commits, or

if such be the character of their recent enactments, deliberately framed in the strange hope of satisfying the expectations of the parliament and people of this country,—if the colonial legislatures can have so egregiously misapprehended the whole current of British principle and

causes to be committed, any wanton act of cruelty towards any slave, or shall wantonly, maliciously, and cruelly whip, beat, or bruise any slave, such person, on conviction before two justices, may be — what do you think? Subjected to some adequate punishment? Oh, no: he may be fined 25*l.* currency, or about 17*l.* sterling! So that you see any one may torture a slave; he may bruise and crush his body; he may inflict upon him every cruelty short of dismemberment or death, even cruelties from which death would be a relief, and yet does he pay not more than about 17*l.* sterling: and observe, that the 17*l.* mentioned here is the *maximum*, and may be reduced to 17*d.* according to the pleasure of the justices before whom the complaint is made. And yet this act received the sanction of the legislature of that island; nay, it was even described by the gentleman who proposed it as an act which would do honour to themselves, and endear their remembrance to posterity. Nor is this all. By the same act, any person may maim, mutilate, or dismember a slave, and be liable, on conviction, only to fine or imprisonment, (no *minimum* or *maximum* being fixed), as the Court shall think fit. It was in this island that, previous to 1805, the *murder* of a slave, when it could be proved, was punished by a fine of 11*l.* sterling. In 1805, that act was repealed, and, in its stead, it was enacted, that any person wilfully, maliciously, wantonly, and *without provocation*, killing any slave, shall be adjudged guilty of felony, and shall suffer death without benefit of clergy. But the nature of the provocation was not defined; so that let a slave but hold up his finger—nay, let him but look cross or dissatisfied—let him even use an irritating or contemptuous expression, there is at once sufficient provocation, the poor wretch's life may be taken with impunity. The words 'without provocation' have since been erased from the law; but it still remains the law, that if any person shall unfortunately kill by accident the slave of another, he shall only be liable to an action at law for the value of the slave; or if any slave shall be killed while committing or attempting to commit any robbery, theft, burglary, or arson, or in the attempt to maim or injure any White person, the person killing any such slave shall not be punished for the same either capitally or otherwise." Such are some of the enactments which will endear the remembrance of the Barbadoes legislature to posterity!

"Let us now," continued Mr. Brougham, "look at the other side of the account, and contrast with the impunity of the White the punishments to be inflicted on slaves, as well as the sort of offences of which they may be guilty. I find it enacted, for example, 'that any slaves guilty of quarrelling or fighting with one another; or of insolent language or gestures' [mark that] 'to any White person; or of swearing, or uttering any obscene speeches; or of drunkenness, or making, selling, throwing, or firing squibs, serpents, or other fireworks; or of cock-fighting, or gaming; or of riding on a faster gait than a walk; or of driving on a faster gait than a gentle trot; or of cruelly whipping or beating any horse, mare, mule, ass, or other cattle; or of negligently driving any cart, &c., or of any disorderly conduct or behaviour, shall, on conviction before a magistrate, be—What do you think? sentenced to a week's imprisonment, or fined a few shillings?—No; shall be whipped at the discretion of such magistrate, not exceeding thirty-nine stripes! Again, it is wisely enacted, that 'any slave who shall hear any other slave speak any words *tending* to mutiny or rebellion, or shall know of his having gunpowder or arms in his possession for purposes of rebellion, and shall not immediately disclose the same, shall suffer death, without benefit of clergy, or such other punishment as the court may think fit.' Here is legislation with a vengeance! You see that the slave who hears another slave use words *tending* to rebellion (of which *tendency* mind.

feeling,—would it not be the height of fatuity to continue to look for any useful reforms from that quarter? The work must be undertaken and executed by the British Parliament. They alone are competent to the task. In no other way can a reasonable hope be entertained, either of effectually mitigating the rigours of colonial bondage, or of finally abolishing that opprobrious state of society.

It cannot be supposed, that, in the hands of the men who framed, and who boast of having framed, such enactments, the administration of the slave laws should manifest any remarkable traits of lenity and forbearance, or indicate any peculiar respect for Negro life or Negro comfort. On the contrary, the Parliamentary Papers exhibit many atrocious cases of judicial oppression, which have taken place in the colonies, and which may possibly become the subject of early parliamentary investigation*. If so, we trust they may lead to the institution of some adequate securities against the effects, on the lives and happiness of the Negro and Coloured races, of the blind and irrational alarms, and headstrong and ungovernable passions, of the dominant party, who exclusively act as judges and jurors.

But of all the harsh features of the colonial slave-laws, none is more revolting to every feeling of humanity and justice, than that which makes the very act of complaining a crime in the slave. In him, even the murmurs of suffering nature must be suppressed. We may see this lamentable perversion of all established principles of just legislation fully and strikingly illustrated in the recorded proceedings of the Fiscal of Berbice; of whom, at the same time, it is but right to say, that he appears to be a person of much natural mildness of disposition.—Four Negroes, belonging to the Hon. Mr. Katz, complained to the Fiscal of harsh usage by the manager. On the mere denial of the party accused, the Fiscal punished three of the complainants, with seventy-five lashes, and one with fifty.—Again: three Negroes belonging to General Murray, late Governor of Demerara, complained to the Fiscal of overwork, and want of food, and severity of treatment. Two of them were selected by the Fiscal to receive the torture of seventy-five lashes each†.

But it is needless to proceed. Similar instances might be multiplied without end. Nay, the laws of almost all the colonies provide

he is, in the first instance, constituted the sole judge) must make up his mind not only that such is their tendency, but also that the White judge to whom he is to make the communication, will also make up his mind that such is their tendency; and if he does not do this—that is to say, if he does not make up his mind beforehand, to be of the same opinion with the White judge to whom he is to make a communication—then is he to be hanged without benefit of clergy, or be liable to such other punishment as the Court may think fit. It is needless to say much more upon this act, which is to entitle its framers to the grateful remembrance of posterity.”

* The trials of the alleged insurgents in Demerara and Jamaica are here more particularly alluded to.

† See Parliamentary Returns from the Fiscal of Berbice, pp. 19 and 50. See particularly his instructions to one of his officers, pp. 57 and 58, for a curious specimen of West-Indian justice.

that, in the case of a slave complaining of ill-treatment, the magistrate may, if he deems the complaint unfounded, punish the complainant with the cart-whip at his discretion*. And yet, be it remembered that, as Negro evidence is not admitted in proof of the complaint, the complainant has no possible means, should the accused deny it, of establishing the most undoubted fact.

Since the publication of the abstract to which reference has hitherto been made, another official document, of considerable importance, has appeared; namely, "A Report on the Civil and Criminal Justice of the West Indies," by the only surviving commissioner, Mr. Fortunatus Dwarris, employed to inquire into that subject.

This gentleman, it appears, is the proprietor of a considerable sugar estate in Jamaica, cultivated by about 220 slaves†; and although we have no doubt that it was his purpose fairly to represent the case which he was employed to investigate, yet we must lament that it should have been found necessary to select a person in his peculiar circumstances for this delicate and difficult task. It surely never can be expedient to place any public functionary in a situation in which private interests, early prepossessions, and the most cherished associations and attachments, may be found unavoidably to clash with the uncompromising claims of public duty. If his Majesty's Ministers have felt it incumbent on them to determine, that henceforward no governor, or judge, or fiscal, or protector of slaves, shall be the owner of a plantation cultivated by slaves‡, it surely is still more indispensable that the persons who are expressly delegated to inquire into the abuses of a particular system should not be chosen from the very class whose interests, as well as whose strongest prejudices, are deeply involved in its defence. We have been almost involuntarily led to this reflection, by the manifest anxiety which Mr. Dwarris evinces to prevent his exposure of the many evils in the judicial administration of the West-Indies, from producing an impression adverse to West-Indian planters, or to that system of Negro slavery which, as planters, they are naturally solicitous to accredit.

The general view of the condition of the Negro slave, which Mr. Dwarris has in this case gone out of his way to give, is, without doubt, widely different from that which a consideration either of general principles, or of the facts of the case, would permit any disinterested and unprejudiced individual to form.—"The poor slave, if left to himself," the Reporter informs us, "is generally contented and happy. Possessing a spot to which he is commonly attached"—(we

* See, for an example, a law much vaunted by Mr. Dwarris, the Consolidated Slave Law of Jamaica, of December 1816, section 28; where we find that two magistrates *may*, if they think proper, inquire into the complaint of a slave; but that, if it shall appear that such complaint was groundless, they "SHALL PUNISH the complainant, and the person giving information thereof, IN SUCH MANNER AS TO THEM MAY SEEM PROPER." This is what is called protecting slaves in the West Indies.

† Mr. Dwarris's estate is Golden Grove, in the parish of St. George's. In March 1823, there were upon it 221 slaves.

‡ See Preface to the Debate of 15th May 1823, pp. xxvii—xxxii.

shall presently see by what tenure he holds this spot)—“ Possessing a spot to which he is commonly attached, looking to his master” (a master, be it recollect, generally 4000 miles off, whom he never sees, and cannot therefore look to, but) “ looking to his master for support in health, care in sickness, and advice and help in distress and difficulty, the improvident Negro, far from pining in misery, dances and sleeps, trifles and dreams away life, thoughtless, careless, and happily ignorant of his own unprotected condition, and of the impotent fury of the laws.” This, be it remembered, refers more immediately to Barbadoes; the very colony where, a few years ago, hundreds of Negro lives were sacrificed with breathless dispatch, by the operation of laws which the Report represents as only *impotently* furious.—“ A little more time, and a little less work, form,” adds the Reporter, “ the narrow boundary of the wants and wishes of the Negro*.” And what has reduced the Negro to this abject and bratish state of existence; a state which this gentleman considers as a subject even of satisfactory contemplation?—And, supposing such a picture as that of Mr. Dwarris to be realized on the estates of a few of the few resident planters, yet in what respects does it differ from that which might be given, by many an English gentleman, of his stud of horses, or of his kennel of hounds? The comforts and enjoyments of the Negro, on the shewing of this gentleman, are, like those of the horse and the dog, exclusively of the animal kind. Are we, then, to shut out of our view that the Negro is a human being, born with the power of looking afore and after; possessing the capacities of thought, intelligence, reflection;—that he is endowed with desires, affections, cares, passions, responsibilities, and—may we dare to add—RIGHTS,—in common with ourselves? Shall we forget that the poor slave was formed, like his master, in the image of God; has shared in the same moral ruin; has been redeemed by the same blood; and is an heir of the same immortality? If, then, the delineation of Mr. Dwarris were as generally true as it is notoriously the reverse; still, to level the Negro’s highest enjoyments with those of the brutes that perish; to make his whole existence, its comfort, and even its duration, to depend, like theirs, on the will, the caprice, the prudence, the health, or the life of another; to put it within the discretion of that other not only to be himself the sole arbiter of the destinies of his slave, the food he shall eat, the clothes he shall wear, the labour he shall undergo, the stripes he shall receive, the indignities, nay, the tortures, he shall suffer, but even to delegate these tremendous powers to third parties;—what is all this but a cruel spoliation of man’s inalienable rights; an impious usurpation, for which nothing can compensate; an insult to the Majesty of Heaven itself?

Some idea of the wretched insecurity of the tenure, by which slaves enjoy even the spot to which the Report tells us they are attached, together with all the dearest ties and charities of life, may be obtained from the case of a Mr. Padmore, who was driven to the

* See Mr. Dwarris’s Report, p. 15.

necessity (a necessity of common occurrence in the West Indies) of selling his estate to satisfy his creditors. "The slaves," it is stated, "he *could* have sold separately (detached from the estate), at a much higher rate; but they came to him in a body, with most distressing cries, and threw themselves on the ground before him; when a spokesman, appointed by the rest, fell down at his feet, and implored him, in all their names, not to separate them, both from himself and the estate. They were ready to follow him to the other end of the island; but if he could not retain them about himself, if his necessities compelled him to sell them, they besought him not to part friends and relations, husbands and wives, parents and children; not to tear them from their houses and gardens; but to let them go with the land. He could not resist such an appeal, and he lost at least forty pounds a-head by it." (p. 22.)—This occurrence says much, it is true, for the ruined individual who had the courage and the feeling to make this sacrifice;—but what does it say for the system; for that state of society, that state of law, which can for one moment tolerate and sanction such enormities? Even Mr. Dwarris admits, that, by the law of Barbadoes, there is no express direction that families should be sold together; nothing in any Act prohibiting the separation of husband and wife, parents and children. (p. 39.) He endeavours, however, to palliate the effect of this statement, by remarking, that *many* of our other islands had adopted, with the best effect, a humane provision to prevent the separation of families. In venturing to make this statement, in which, however, we believe him to be mistaken*, he ought at least to have named the islands in which such a provision had been adopted; especially as, in the case of the only two other islands, Tobago and Grenada, whose laws he speaks of, he himself distinctly tells us, that "unattached slaves are ordered to be sold one by one, except mother and child under twelve years of age." (pp. 81 and 103.) We find him, indeed, becoming the apologist of that general principle of separating the slaves from the land, which destroys, root and branch, even the miserable semblance of property which a slave can be said to possess in his house and garden. "However desirable it may appear," he observes, "to prevent the slave from being torn from his home and garden, it would be found very difficult, *consistently with a due regard to the interest of creditors*," (the paramount consideration, of course, in the minds of colonial legislators,) "to provide any remedy for the evil." It would be unsuitable to a state of things in which the support of credit, and the security for borrowed capital, form the *first* object of attention, and even of legislative care

* There is a provision in the laws of Jamaica, that when slaves are *sold by the marshall*, members of the same family shall be sold together. But to make this regulation of any material use, the members of the same family should be seized, as well as sold, together. There is no restraint whatever in any of the colonies on the power of the *master* to sell his slaves separately. In Jamaica, the seizure and sale by public auction of single slaves (which slaves must have parents, or children, and other near relations,) for the king's taxes, is an event of weekly occurrence. See the Royal Gazette of Jamaica, *passim*.

and provision." (p. 32.)—The first objects of attention, therefore, are not human life and human comfort—at least in cases where the skin happens to be darkly tinged—but the security of credit and capital; and that even in the estimate of the author of this Report—a Report which, while it affords some curious illustrations of the regard paid to the Negro as an article of the *master's* property, one of *his* chattels, one of his *available securities*, exemplifies no less strikingly the utter disregard of all his *rights and feelings* as a man, as a rational and sentient being.

We shall say nothing of the scandalous abuse of those forfeitures to the Crown, by means of escheats, by which the name of the King is abused to purposes of oppression and wrong, in a manner altogether unconstitutional, as well as most disreputable*: but let us take a view of the proceedings of what are called Slave Courts in Barbadoes.—

"In cases of *capital* offences by slaves"—and these cases are very numerous—"the court is composed of two justices, and three freeholders of the neighbourhood of the place where the offence is committed. These five compose the court, and are all judges both of the law and the fact. They are not appointed to meet at any fixed time, but only as occasion requires." "When the court is assembled, no indictment is preferred, or bill found by a grand jury. The magistrate before whom the complaint was made is taken to have decided that there is sufficient ground to put the slave on his trial, and this magistrate sits upon the trial."—The evidence may consist of the evidence of slaves; but not upon oath, unless they have been baptized. "They are sometimes sworn on grave-dirt, according to a superstition. A Negro's wife's evidence is admitted" (against him) "because it is in general a nominal, and not a legal witness. In the case of false evidence given by a slave, the justice, or the court, before which the false evidence is given, directs the offender to be" (we presume forthwith) "flogged." "There is no regular record: the magistrates who try the case keep an account of the proceedings. These are not returned to any public office; and, after the lapse of a few years, it would be difficult to procure evidence to prove a former acquittal, if a slave were to be apprehended a second time for the same offence, while neither the slave nor the master has any remedy for the malicious pro-

* Slaves escheating to the Crown from intestacy, &c. are not considered as freed. "The escheater reports the verdict to the chancellor in court. If there are slaves, the chanceller directs them to be sold, with the real estate, if they are annexed to it; separately, if they are unattached. The nett proceeds, after deduction of heavy expenses, are brought into court, and placed at the disposal of the chanceller. The Attorney-general fears extreme hardship has arisen in some cases." (p. 83. See also p. 43.)—What a monstrous system of oppression has grown up in our slave colonies! And in this instance, as in many others, we have the Crown aiding, and profiting by, the wrong. The accident of intestacy throws a number of wretched beings into the hands of his majesty. His majesty, instead of protecting them as subjects, and giving them freedom, is made to sell them into interminable bondage, even separating, in some cases, the nearest and dearest connexions, and all for his own profit, or for that of his officers.

secution of the slave. If the five members of the court are agreed, a conviction takes place; otherwise the prisoner is acquitted. Upon conviction, *sentence of death must be passed in all capital cases.*" An appeal may be brought *by the owner* (but by him only) "before the governor and council. If there is no appeal, no copy of the trial is laid before the governor, or report made to him or any other superior authority, before the execution takes place. The warrant of execution is directed to the constable who attends the trial; and he executes it *without delay*. There is no fixed time or appointed place for the public execution of slave malefactors." "That the owner may not be discouraged to detect and discover the offences of his Negroes, a condemned slave is always appraised, and the value" (not exceeding a limited sum) "paid to the owner out of the public treasury, the party injured being first indemnified;" but if "the master had not duly provided for the support of the slave, and **NECESSITY** might have **COMPELLED** the Negro to commit the offence, the whole appraised value is to be paid to the party injured, and nothing to the master." And yet "the execution of the slave might proceed!" The trials of slaves in this island, the Report goes on to remark in duly measured terms, "are very unsatisfactory. We heard them pronounced disgraceful. The judges, it was said, are ignorant; the proceedings are slovenly; the charge, being unwritten, shifts with the case. A disposition to favour, where it exists," (and the Reporter might have added, a disposition to condemn where it exists,) "receives no check from the want of publicity. There being no assigned place or appointed time for the execution of slave malefactors, the wretched convict, *as soon as sentence is passed, is fastened to the nearest tree*; unless, which frequently happens, the owner of the soil is at hand to prevent it. In such case, *the miserable culprit is dragged from tree to tree, from estate to estate; and in one case, of then recent occurrence, the constable was at last forced to throw the exhausted sufferer off the town-bridge, securing the rope by a lamp-post.*" pp. 48—50.

Is it necessary to add a single word more to these revolting statements? Yet we cannot forbear referring to the authority of Mr. Dwarris on one or two other topics. After the eulogy pronounced by him on the general treatment of the slaves in Barbadoes, the Meeting will scarcely be prepared for the following representations of the same gentlemen in the very same Report. "Slaves in this island," he says, "are without legal protection or redress for personal injuries." ... "The slave has no remedy, in case of the greatest oppression by the master or his delegate, or the grossest injury by third persons; though the *master* (in case of his slave being assaulted and robbed) may have reparation in damages for *the loss of service, or the injury to his property, in the slave*. The murder of a slave, *wilfully, maliciously, wantonly, and without provocation**, is now a capital crime. But there

* Mr. Dwarris does not seem to be aware that the words, "without provocation," which formed a part of the Act of 1805, were omitted in a subsequent Act, that of 1817.

is no other legislative provision, restraining the absolute power of the master over the slave, or inflicting punishment upon the owners or others, in cases of mayem, mutilation, dismemberment, or cruel treatment *. No other Act of Assembly has been framed for the protection of slaves ; no tribunal is specially appointed for inquiry into their wrongs. A slave who is, or thinks himself, aggrieved, looks in vain, in this island, for a proper quarter in which to prefer his complaint. *It can no where be received.*" "*Murder is the only case in which the law interferes.*" "*For the punishment of general oppression and maltreatment of a slave, there is no provision by any law of Barbadoes.* If inflicted by the master, it would be *dispunishable*. If perpetrated by a third person, the owner would have his remedy by civil action ; but the slave would still be without redress†. There is not, in Barbadoes, any law regulating the quantum and kind of punishment, the hours of labour and rest, the provision of food, and (except nominally) of clothing. These are dependent on the performance of moral duties, of which good men feel the obligation, but of which the breach is not cognizable before any earthly tribunal. A wicked and cruel master or delegate (so that he do not kill or maim ‡ a slave) may inflict on him ANY degree of severity of punishment. *No man, or set of men, has legal power to call him to account for working his slave as long as he likes; for whipping him as much as he pleases; for chaining, for starving him.*" "*A master has uncontrolled, undefined, and absolute power.*" Where then, asks Mr. Dwarris, very justly, however inconsistently, " where then is the protection of the slave; and where, in case of accident, the justification of the master ? " In a case even of a very grievous bodily injury, inflicted upon a slave by a manager, the sufferer himself, or his slave brethren who were present, cannot give evidence, even though all the free persons on the premises should have been *designedly* sent out of the way. In such a case, a slave is not allowed to be a prosecutor. *Maimed, mutilated, disfigured, dismembered,*" (I am putting, says Mr. D., the most aggravated case), " his wounds must be the only tongue permitted to relate his wrongs." (pp. 62—66).—These, however, will speak for him in this country, if they do not speak for him in the colonies §.

* This, we suppose, was written before the Act of 1824 had passed. The amount of the protection afforded by that Act against the evils enumerated above, may be seen in the extract from Mr. Brougham's speech, in a preceding note, p. 8.

† The truth of these statements is hardly affected by the opprobrious and inefficient provisions of the Act of 1824. If these provisions were far less exceptionable in their terms, they would still remain a dead letter, where Negro evidence is shut out.

‡ The exception of maiming is inconsistent with the other statements of Mr. Dwarris, and with the law of Barbadoes prior to 1824.

§ The observations of Sir James Mackintosh, on the inconsistent statements of Mr. Dwarris, were peculiarly just and forcible. " One passage," he observed, " to which I shall call your attention, shews the grievous disqualifications under which the Negroes labour in procuring redress for injury. Mr. Dwarris, in the Report of the Judicial Establishments of Barbadoes, states:— ' In a case of even very grievous bodily injury, inflicted upon a slave by a

But to proceed; "It is generally held," says the Report, "as a principle in slave colonies, that slaves cannot acquire property except for the benefit of their owners. By law they cannot, but only by in-

manager, the sufferer himself, or his slave brethren who were present, cannot give evidence, even though all the free persons on the premises should have been designedly sent out of the way. In such a case, a slave is not allowed to be a prosecutor. *Maimed, mutilated, disfigured, dismembered*, his wounds must be the only tongues permitted to relate his wrongs! Such is the condition, the degraded and defenceless condition, of the unfortunate and devoted inhabitants of our colonies. What then must be our surprise to meet in the statements of this very same reporter, an eulogy on the happy state in which the slaves live under this degraded condition? 'But left to himself,' the Reporter informs us, 'the poor slave is generally contented and happy.' Possessing a spot to which he is commonly attached, looking to his master for support in health, care in sickness, and advice and help in distress and difficulty, the improvident Negro, far from pining in misery, dances and sleeps, trifles and dreams away life, thoughtless, careless, and happily ignorant of his own unprotected condition, and of the impotent fury of the laws.'—What! is it then possible that a human being, who may be 'maimed, mutilated, disfigured, and dismembered' with impunity, can frisk and dance, and dream away life in thoughtless ignorance of his unprotected condition? Are these the persons, who, we are to suppose, lead, as they are described to do, a life of luxurious enjoyment? Should we not rather say, that there could not be a more humiliating picture of human degradation than that presented to us by persons who could be contented under such a condition of existence? As has been very properly suggested in the Report just read, 'supposing such a picture as this to be realized on the estates of a few of the few resident planters, yet in what respects does it differ from that which might be given, by many an English gentleman, of his stud of horses, or of his kennel of hounds? The comforts and enjoyments of the Negro, on the shewing of Mr. Dwarris, are, like those of the horse and the dog, exclusively of the animal kind.' The illustration is most appropriate; the comparison is just. It would appear to me that this ingenious writer, Mr. Dwarris, had studied poetry more than truth. He appears to have had in his view a well-known passage of one of our most celebrated poets (Pope), in which he points out the wise dispensations of our Creator in ascribing ignorance to the brute creation as a mitigation of their condition:—

"The lamb thy rich dooms to bleed to-day,
Had he thy reason, would he skip and play?
Pleased to the last, he crops the flowery food,
And licks the hand just raised to shed his blood."

This was the passage which doubtless Mr. Dwarris had in his eye, when he spoke of the gaiety with which West-Indian slaves could dance and amuse themselves, whilst the same cruelty could be extended to them as is shewn, and often, I must say, with wantonness and depravity, shewn to the brute creation. This is a passage which the poet introduces to 'justify the ways of God to man': it shews how, by ignorance of their sufferings, he mitigates the condition of the brute creation. And it suggests to our ingenious writer, the parallel case of a million of our fellow-creatures reduced to a similar degradation. If this, then, is to be regarded as a state of happiness, it is a state of happiness that can only exist by extinguishing within human beings, the capacities of thought, intelligence, and reflection,—by depriving them of the desires, affections, and passions of ordinary men—by brutalizing them—nay, by worse than brutalizing them: for to reduce a human being to the level of a brute, it is necessary to deprive him of reason and reflection; and the degradation thereby inflicted upon him is greater than even that of the brute. So it was that this gentleman thought proper to represent these degraded Negroes: like the lamb,

"Pleased to the last, he crops his flowery food,
And licks the hand just raised to shed his blood."

dulgence." p. 111.) Again, "the slave has not any means of acquiring his freedom without the consent of the master. There is no redemption of the slave in this island by force of law;" (nor in Tobago and Grenada, nor, indeed, in any of the islands;) and, "every Negro is presumed to be a slave, unless he can legally prove the contrary." p. 67.

To much the same effect is the view given of the legal rights of slaves in Tobago and Grenada. In the former island, the chief justice, Mr. Pigott, testifies as follows:—"A manager sent all free persons out of the way, and then gave a Negro 150 lashes. The Negro was brought, in a state in which he might have died, to us, the sitting magistrates. We had no means of proving it. I proposed a bill to admit slave evidence, or to make the accused purge himself on oath. The bill was not approved." (p. 89.) The testimony of the attorney-general of Tobago is to the same effect: "*I know*," he says, "*as a magistrate, cases of extreme cruelty that have passed unpunished for want of slave evidence.*" "*It is very common, when they wish to be cruel, to send free persons out of the way. I have known many such cases* *." I think it a very common cause of discontent among the

* And yet we are told by the Quarterly Review, in its last Article on this subject (No. LXIV.), and in the face of all the official documents laid before Parliament in the last session, (*to not one of which, no, not even to the Berbice Fiscal's Report, has it once referred,*) that the amelioration of slaves in the West Indies is proceeding at a rapid rate. This is, however, but one of the numerous mistakements which abound in every page of that article, evidently the work of a West-Indian proprietor, who knows enough of the public feeling in this country, not violently to outrage it; and who knows enough of the West-Indian system to be studious to draw a veil over it. From the internal evidence, it may be safely affirmed, that it is the work of a writer who is labouring, by means of the general belief of the official character of the work, and by the assumption of a certain air of official moderation, to make the friends of Government believe that Government itself is receding from its solemn pledges on the subject of Colonial Slavery. In this point of view, the wrong it does to the character of the Colonial Office is far greater than any injury it can do to the Anti-Slavery cause. A man who could write on colonial subjects, as he has done, with the late parliamentary returns before his eyes, and not once allude to them, must have deep interests or strong prejudices of his own to contend with: we leave him to the discredit which so disingenuous a proceeding cannot fail to secure for his statements, with a single remark.

The reviewer is extremely anxious to fix the charge of inflammation on the Reports of the Anti-Slavery Society. In order to this, he cites two passages in speeches made at its General Meetings, in which few besides himself will see any thing but truth forcibly stated; and a passage from one of the Reports, the censure of which sufficiently betrays the prejudices of the colonial planter. This passage, and we are glad to repeat it, is as follows:—"The civil degradation which they" (the free People of Colour) "themselves are doomed to sustain are many and galling; and the Committee believe that they are sufficiently enlightened to have at length a just and settled conviction, that the slavery of their colour is the real root of the evils they experience; and that, while that slavery is perpetuated; while the slave continues a *British*" (the original word was *brutish*) "outcast from the pale of society, deprived of his natural rights, a mere beast of burden, a mere instrument of profit;—they who partake of his colour must partake also of his debasement." To this quotation the reviewer adds, that such language is calculated to produce, and ac-

slaves, that, when they have been ill-treated, and bring their fellow-slaves as evidence, such witnesses cannot be received. They go away with a feeling of injustice." (p. 89.) The same gentleman has since expressed an opinion that by the *new* Tobago Act, "the power of the master has been limited in almost every point essential to the welfare and comfort of the slave." This opinion only shews how easily some men may be satisfied with the shew of reform. Lord Bathurst wisely disallowed the very act which the Attorney-general thus commends.

The Report from Grenada, though varying in a few points, is not more favourable than that from Tobago. Some of the Grenada laws are extremely harsh, and even manifest what may be properly called a wantonness of severity. (pp. 95, 96.) And as for the appointment of guardians of slaves, of which we have heard so loud a boast, it is admitted by the present Report to be inefficacious. No independent men, we are expressly told, can be found to fill the situation; but it is filled by overseers or managers, who cannot be expected to denounce their employers (p. 98); and "in all cases between Black or Coloured persons and Whites," observes the Attorney-general, "the prejudice of juries is very strong in favour of Whites." (p. 99.)

Neither in Tobago, nor in Grenada, "are there any public institutions, by which infant or adult slaves are instructed in religious principles or useful knowledge*." There are no Sunday-schools." The Wesleyan Methodists alone have given any instruction to the slaves of these islands. (pp. 89 and 112.) In Barbadoes, only one school is said to exist for Black or Coloured children (p. 18), though the Black and Coloured population amounts to about 90,000.

Such are some of the material facts brought to light, in the most

tually has produced, mischief in the West Indies. (p. 526.) The colonists, however, must have thought differently from their advocate; for they republish in the colonial newspapers such passages as these without the slightest reserve. Besides, does he mean to deny, (he has not been bold enough to deny,) the correctness of every sentiment which the passage contains? And would he have the Society (as he and his friends have been doing so long, and on no occasion more than in the framing of this review), to conceal from parliament and the public, for whom they write, the real state of the case? If the disease be not known how is a suitable remedy to be applied? And the reviewer is challenged to point out a single particular in the above sentence, in which the diagnostics of the disease in question have been overstated, Mr. Dwarris himself being constituted the judge.

The real character of this article is very happily described in the succeeding Number of the Quarterly Review (No. LXV. p. 6.) where, speaking of Mr. Lingard's historical work, the reviewer observes,—"After all, the work is by no means so effective as might be expected. The overstrained pretension to candour excites distrust. The tone *appears* dispassionate, not because the mind of the author is temperate, or resolved to be impartial, but because it is full of suppressed rather than subdued passion. The very speciousness and elaborate plausibility have in them something suspicious. And while the author strains every nerve to convince us of his indifference to all but truth, it is impossible not to feel, as we read, that we are occupied only with the artful statements of a very zealous partisan."

* In the latter island it is said, "there are some schools on estates." p. 112.

authentic form, by this recent Report; in which, however, we must admit that many *opinions* are expressed which it is exceedingly difficult to reconcile with those facts, or, indeed, with the notorious realities of the case. Take an example:—Mr. Dwarris states it to be the *only just ground of complaint against the present inhabitants of Barbadoes*, that they had not repealed a certain act, which inflicts the punishment of slitting the nose, and burning the face with a hot iron on a *Negro* who strikes a *Christian* a second time. But when Mr. Dwarris thus sweepingly cleared the Barbadians from every other charge, had he not heard of the atrocities of 1804, reported by Lord Seaforth?—of the wholesale massacres of their slaves in 1816?—of the destruction of the Methodist chapel, and the expulsion of the Missionary Shrewsbury in 1823? or of their new slave-law of 1824? And is it not this very gentleman, whose Report of the Barbadoes slave-courts, and of the summary and brutal executions of their convicts, and of the unprotected state of the whole slave population, we have just been reading? How are we to explain such strange incongruities as these?

But it would require far too detailed a statement were we to go through all the inconsistencies and incorrectnesses which might be pointed out in this, in some respects, invaluable Report*. On the whole, however, we are extremely thankful for its appearance; and we cannot doubt that it will do much to open the eyes of the public to the multiplied abominations of this unchristian and merciless system.

Never, however, let the people of England forget, that of this unchristian and merciless system they will continue to be the criminal upholders, if they now refrain from lifting up their voice against it; or if they silently acquiesce in contributing, as they now do, largely and directly to its support. On this part of the subject, however, we mean not now to enlarge. In the Second Report of the Society, the question of bounties and protecting duties has been amply discussed; and not only their impolicy, but their malign and wasting influence on the happiness and increase of the slave population, as well as their pernicious effects even on the interests of the masters, have been fully and, as we believe, most incontrovertibly established†. We will therefore now content ourselves with remarking, that it is absolutely vain for us to be hoping to succeed in abolishing slavery; or to expect that by the vehemence of our speeches, or by the strength of our resolutions, or even by the severity of our enactments, we shall be able very materially to abate this evil, if we continue, as we now do, to extend to the slave-holder those solid marks of our favour which are conveyed to him in bounties and protecting duties; thus supplying to him the very means of maintaining his iniquitous system, against the united wishes of the parliament and the people of England.

And now, after the statement which has just been given, combined

* For a few examples, we refer the reader to the Appendix.

† See Second Report, pp. 16—43.

with all our previous information, are we not entitled to call upon the people of England to come forward to strengthen the hands of the Government, in the righteous work of carrying into effect the hitherto abortive resolutions of Parliament on the subject of Colonial Slavery?* We call upon them therefore to assemble in every county, and city, and town, and even village of the United Kingdom, in order to testify their abhorrence of this impious system, and to implore of the Legislature, respectfully indeed, but most earnestly, to relieve them from its guilt and its burden. Let no man in this free and happy country, where the voice of the very meanest has its appropriate weight in Parliament, imagine that he can discharge himself from the performance of this solemn duty; or—should his application to Parliament fail of its effect—from adopting every other expedient in his power, such as abstinence from slave-grown sugar, the promotion of cultivation by free labour, &c. for wiping away this foul stain from the national character. And we would address this call to men of all political parties, in the state. Those of every party who have sympathized with the victims of despotism in Spain, in Italy, and in Greece, have now an opportunity of combining, to deliver 330,000 of their own fellow-subjects from a still more grievous despotism. The friends of the Government are bound to see its orders respected, and to repress that insubordinate and contumelious spirit in the colonists which would set those orders at nought. The members of the Opposition are bound by all their professed principles, and by all the recollections which are associated with the venerated name of Fox, to unite heart and hand in undoing the fetters of our own fellow-subjects. Above all (to avail ourselves of the language of one of the ablest advocates of this cause)—above all, we would call on **CHRISTIANS** of every name to come forward to lend their aid as one man to deliver their country from this great national iniquity—“to reform this cruel and impious system, which shuts out the light of the Gospel; which violates, in the grossest manner, all its precepts; which keeps, in a cruel thralldom, the minds as well as bodies of its unfortunate victims; and which adds to its other enormities the fierceness of anti-christian persecution. There would surely be an inconsistency in the charitable efforts now making to convert our fellow-creatures

* The colonists, in almost all the colonies, seem to think that what they require is to have their case fully and fairly exhibited before the British public. It is strange they should not yet have discovered that every attempted vindication of their system has only ended in rendering its maintenance more hopeless. Under the influence of this infatuation, however, they have subscribed large sums of money to enable Mr. Macqueen of Glasgow to repair to London, and there establish a daily paper expressly for their defence. We have no doubt that Mr. Macqueen will labour diligently to earn his wages; but his employers will be sadly disappointed if they expect that, by his best efforts, he will achieve any thing beyond the echo of their own sentiments, the gratification of their own peculiar tastes and resentments, and the applause of their own little circles. Some estimate may be formed of the reliance which may be placed on this gentleman's fairness as a controversialist, by consulting a pamphlet which has just appeared from the pen of Mr. Stephen, entitled, “England enslaved by her own Slave Colonies.” pp. 46—49.

in the most distant regions of the globe, while we suffer our* fellow-subjects to be kept in pagan darkness, and the vilest moral degradation, not by choice but by compulsion, through a domestic tyranny, which our own power, within our own territories, alone upholds." To all, then, we would say, in conclusion, in the words of the same eloquent writer, "Come forward with your petitions. Instruct your representatives. Give or withhold your suffrages for the next Parliament, and use your personal influence throughout the country; all in such a manner as may best promote the success of this great and sacred cause. If you succeed, you will give a new triumph to the British Constitution. You will exalt the glory of your country, in that best point, her moral elevation, and recommend her to the favour of Heaven." "If you fail, you will at least have the inestimable consolation that you have done what you could 'to undo the heavy burden, and to let the oppressed go free; and that the sins and calamities of your country, however pernicious in their consequences to yourselves or your children, were evils which you could not avert*."

One word more: we rejoice to be able to report, that the number of Associations, and especially of Ladies' Associations, for the abolition of slavery, has been increasing of late. We trust that they will be largely multiplied both in the metropolis and in the country at large.

The present meeting, for the purpose of petitioning Parliament, has, we are happy to say been anticipated in several places, by the impulse of that popular feeling which furnishes the best pledge of our ultimate success. In this important line of service Norfolk has taken the lead, and has been followed by the cities of Norwich and York, and by Birmingham, Hull, Beverley, Derby, and Ipswich; as it had been preceded, though not for the purpose of petitioning, by Edinburgh. In all these places our cause has been advocated with remarkable power and effect, and has happily united the general suffrage. The Corporation of the City of London has signalized itself by its zeal in the same cause; and we are anxious to record the high sense we entertain of the advantage which must accrue from the nearly unanimous and energetic declaration of the chief authorities of the first commercial city in the world, against the principle of colonial monopoly, and in favour of the claims of injured and outraged humanity. The influence of their high example will, we trust, induce the mercantile and manufacturing classes, throughout the kingdom, to come forward to vindicate the commercial character of this country from the discredit, and its commercial interests from the injury, caused by the prolongation of the existing colonial evils.

It would be ingratitude in this connexion to withhold our warm acknowledgments of the great services which have been rendered to our common cause, since we last met, by the able, zealous, indefatigable, and successful efforts of Mr. Cropper of Liverpool.

* See Mr. Stephen's pamphlet, "England enslaved by her own Slave Colonies."

These various indications of the general sympathy in our labours are strong incentives to perseverance. And we must all feel it as not among the least cheering and encouraging circumstances, which we are called to acknowledge with gratitude to the Giver of all good, that we should once more behold among us, and in the chair of this assembly, that loved and revered individual, dear to all to whom the interests of humanity are dear; who, having consecrated the strength and flower of his days to the vindication of the wronged and degraded African, and having at length signally triumphed in the protracted and painful conflict; now, though bending under the weight of added years, still marshals our way, as we trust, to victory, in a no less arduous struggle—in the endeavour to break the yoke of the oppressor, and to achieve the rescue of the oppressed, in every corner of the British dominions. May it please God to spare him to witness the final consummation of this labour of love and mercy!

APPENDIX.

EXAMPLES OF THE INCORRECTNESS AND INCONSISTENCY OF THE STATEMENTS OF MR. DWARRIS.

FIRST, of his INCORRECTNESS.—

I. (p. 10.) Mr. Dwarris speaks of the “vast improvements which have already taken place” in the statute law of Barbadoes. It is a great pity that he did not specify them. We certainly can see no “vast improvement,” even in the law of 1824, as compared with those of 1688, &c. which he chooses to represent as obsolete. As for the single point of admitting free Persons of Colour to give evidence in all cases, it is only doing what almost every other island had done long before. Even now, none are so admitted who have eluded the tax of fifty pounds on manumission.

II. (p. 12.) “It is an incontestable fact that slaves are less frequently and less severely punished for crimes, than are freemen, either in the Colonies or in England.”—Here we have assertion without a tittle of proof. We believe the fact to be altogether untrue. The slave, be it remembered too, is amenable to a domestic tribunal, as well as to a public one.

III. (p. 13.) The singular fact, observes Mr. Dwarris, “of the sloth, and apathy, and profligate courses of the Negroes, &c.” (meaning by the “&c.” the free People of Colour and Indians) “is established beyond contradiction, by concurrent testimony, as existing in every age.”—Now Mr. Dwarris seems bound to produce some adequate authority for this fact of his, other than West-Indian authority. It is a most groundless assertion, which Mr. Dwarris himself must have seen disproved, in the island of Grenada, during his stay there. In that island, a memorial was presented to him, and to Mr. Madock, from the free Negro and Coloured inhabitants, in which they appeal to the testimony of the whole community for their uniform loyalty and good conduct; “contributing, at the same time,” they say, “by our resources, to the revenues of the state, and constituting in ourselves a considerable defence and security to the colony.” We comprise, they add, “by far the greatest part of the free population,” (the Whites being about 900, the Blacks and People of Colour about 2700,) “and possess no small portion of the property in this colony, particularly in the capital, where at

least two thirds are owned by persons of this class." Then follows a most masterly exposition of the grievances under which they labour. But these assertions of the free Negroes and People of Colour, it may be said, are as gratuitous as those of Mr. Dwarris himself. We reply, No. Their truth was examined by the colonial assembly, the very body by whose laws they were oppressed and degraded; and what was their decision? They resolved unanimously, "that the free Coloured inhabitants of these islands are a respectable, well behaved class of the community, and possessed of considerable property in the colony:

"That a bill be immediately brought into the house of assembly, for the purpose of repealing certain clauses" of acts which are specified, "in so far as the rights and privileges of the free Coloured inhabitants are affected thereby:

"That the elective franchise ought to be extended to the People of Colour, possessing the qualifications required," &c.

Now, it does seem extraordinary, that Mr. Dwarris should have entirely omitted, in his Report, the most remote allusion to this recent transaction (June 1823), and should have gone to the uncited records of "every age" for his sweeping charge against a whole race of men. The pledge of the Grenada Assembly, we are sorry to say, has, we believe, been only very partially redeemed.

IV. (p. 13.) Mr. Dwarris apologizes for the severity of the Barbadoes laws, respecting slaves, by remarking, that there, *proportionably more than in other colonies*, the slaves compose a numerous and powerful body. The very reverse of this statement is the fact. The proportion of Whites to slaves, in Barbadoes, is more than double what it is in any of the other colonies, and three, four, or five times as great as in some. The returns on the table of the House of Commons will prove this fact.

V. (p. 17.) "In some of the islands," says Mr. Dwarris, "it was felt to be desirable to restrain the delegated power of the manager or overseer. Accordingly an act was passed" (*in some of the islands!* Could not Mr. Dwarris have named them, and specified the acts?) "restricting the number of blows such person should have the power of inflicting to ten lashes. The manager accordingly always stopped at the prescribed number, **TEN**; but instances of abuse soon occurred, in which, after a short respite, the punishment was repeated.—A new act was framed, providing that a *manager* should only give ten stripes, and no more, for any one and the *same offence*. It was easy however to allege a new offence, and punish, as original, the second constructive delinquency. It was then enacted, that only one punishment, of a limited number of blows, should be inflicted on one and the *same day*, as well as for one and the *same offence*. It was presently discovered, that the severity of the punishment depended much less on the quantum of the blows, than the degree of force with which they were administered. The last, and perhaps the best, of these ineffectual provisions directed that no punishment should be inflicted on any slave, whatever his demerits, until he had recovered from the effects of his former punishment." What doctrine, on the subject of Negro Slavery, Mr. Dwarris wished to establish by this statement, we know not, except it be the incurable viciousness of the system, and the necessity of destroying it root and branch. We suspect, however, that its real object was, to shew the anxiety of the legislatures in *some of the islands*, to protect the Negro from ill treatment; and certainly it would be calculated in some measure to do this, if it were a correct statement. But the fact is, and we challenge Mr. Dwarris to shew the contrary, that *in no island is there any law restraining the MANAGER of an estate to TEN lashes*. The whole of this beautiful fabric of legislative care and solicitude, for the protection of the Negro, has therefore no foundation whatever. Mr. Dwarris has doubtless been imposed upon by some wily informant, who was desirous of obtaining, by any means, the testimony of the Commissioner to "the genuine excellency of the Creole character." (p. 16.) It is impossible for Mr. Dwarris to cite a single written authority in support of the above statement.

These instances of incorrectness in Mr. Dwarris may suffice to shew the caution with which his dicta, unsupported by proof, are to be received. They are, in fact, of no value, but as marking either his credulity or the strength of his prepossessions.—But we have charged him also with INCONSISTENCY; and we are therefore bound to support the charge. We proceed to do so; but here, as in the former case, we can only select a few particulars from the mass.

I. (p. 14.) “Of cruel masters, we indeed sometimes heard: I believe *three* instances were mentioned to us in twelve islands.”—Where Mr. Dwarris sought his information, he does not state: doubtless it was from the masters themselves, and not from the slaves. Had he made the same inquiry in Berbice, he would probably have received the same answer; and yet we should hardly have considered his testimony as weighing a feather against the hundreds of instances revealed to us by the records of the Fiscal of that colony. But how Mr. Dwarris could have made the assertion in the face of the evidence he himself adduces in another part of his Report, we are at a loss to imagine. It so happens, that almost all his laudatory passages are in the first eighteen pages of a Report containing 310 closely printed folio pages, while the contradictions can only be had by wading through the whole. This is a labour to which few will submit. Mr. Dwarris has therefore very judiciously put nearly the whole of his attractive and poetical passages in the first eighteen pages, when he bars the reader’s way to any farther research, by a long and dry detail on the Court of Chancery. The bulky volume, therefore, is apt to be put down with a full conviction of the badness indeed of certain obsolete statutes, the work of the Buccaneers of the seventeenth century, but of the mildness, probity, and genuine excellence of the present race of White islanders, and of the comfort and happiness, and “*plumpness*” of the Black. Not one blow did Mr. Dwarris see a Negro receive from the driver; and he only heard of three instances of cruelty in twelve islands!! Mr. Dwarris never seems to have suspected, that, during the little month he was in each of these islands, care might be taken that he should not be a witness of any instance of field discipline. But when he says he heard of only *three* instances of cruelty in twelve islands, we must confess our utter amazement at the statement; and the ground of our amazement is furnished by Mr. Dwarris himself.

First, as respects *Barbadoes*: he tells us, in addition to passages already quoted in the text, “Slaves, in this island, are without **LEGAL PROTECTION, or EXPRESS FOR PERSONAL INJURIES.**” (p. 62.) “The slave is without *any* security from injury, and hopeless of redress, because **NO LEGAL PROTECTION** is afforded him; and **most of all, BECAUSE HE CANNOT COMPLAIN.**” (p. 66.) But when we advance nearly 200 pages farther into this capacious volume, we find the senior justice of the peace for *Barbadoes*, speaking more explicitly. “I know,” he says, “as a magistrate, cases of extreme cruelty”—he does not say how many—“that have passed unpunished for want of Negro evidence.”—“There *may* be cases in which there would be a risk to a slave in returning to his master, after having preferred a charge of cruelty against him.” Shall we then wonder that Mr. Dwarris heard no such complaints? But the worthy magistrate proceeds: “It is *very common*, when they wish to be cruel, to send all the free people out of the way; I have **KNOWN MANY SUCH CASES.**”—Now, be it noted, that Mr. Dwarris’s eulogy on the humanity of the planters stands at p. 14: this answer of the senior magistrate of *Barbadoes* stands at p. 231!!—In the Report respecting *Tobago*, we have similar testimony adduced. (p. 89.)

II. In his apology for *Barbadoes* (p. 16), Mr. Dwarris gives us a proof of the improving spirit of its inhabitants. “I allude particularly,” he says, “to the establishment of schools for **ALL**.”—Any one reading this passage, and reading no farther, would naturally conclude, that the liberality of the *Barbadians* had founded schools for the instruction, not only of the 16,000 Whites, and 10,000 free People of Colour, who inhabit the island; but for its 80,000 slaves; for it is of the slaves he is treating. But, if we read on, what shall we find to be the

fact? We shall find that there are two schools; *one* for poor *white* children, the other to which children of **ALL COLOURS** are indiscriminately admitted."

III. Again, Mr. Dwarris tells us (at p. 15) of "the paucity of crimes" in Barbadoes, as a proof of the comfort of the slave. But, at p. 233, we have from the senior justice of the peace this fact, that "since last October twelvemonth," he himself had before him "2500 complaints," breaches of the peace and misdemeanors; "most of these complaints, by free Coloured persons against slaves, and against each other." If Mr. Dwarris meant crimes of slaves against their masters, the paucity of these may surely be referred, rather to the power of the master to punish his slaves to any extent, short of death or dismemberment, without the trouble of applying to a magistrate, than to peculiar tenderness for the slave. If he meant crimes of masters against their slaves, be it remembered that he himself has told us that slaves "**CANNOT COMPLAIN**," their complaints "**CAN NO WHERE BE RECEIVED.**"

IV. Mr. Dwarris, at p. 16, speaks of the *Guardian Act* of Grenada, as establishing the *high reputation for humanity* which that island has uniformly maintained. Compare with this statement the following extracts from Mr. Dwarris's own Report of the laws of that island. "Receivers of stolen goods, and harbourers of felons, are to suffer death." (p. 95.) "Slaves contemptuously treating any White or Free person," "shall be punishable *at the discretion* of ONE justice of the peace, not to extend to life or limb." (p. 96.) The Attorney-general states of the *Guardian Act*; "It is not a dead letter: but the misfortune is, that proper persons cannot be found to carry it into effect: they are those who may be liable to it themselves, who are the guardians. Perhaps a man may be a guardian one year, and his neighbour the next, which would prevent his acting strictly according to the act." The governor of the colony testifies, that "there are no persons to be found to fill the situation of *Guardian*, such as must have been contemplated by the act, who are, as they ought to be, independent: they are chiefly overseers or managers. Can *they* be expected to say, that the clothing or food furnished by their employers is insufficient? or if they do, may they not be afraid of the charge being retaliated?" (p. 98.) But, surely, enough has been cited to justify our charge of incorrectness and inconsistency against Mr. Dwarris, and to induce those who read his Report to exercise a *salutary distrust* of every statement he makes, and of every opinion he enounces, which is not supported by clear testimony, instead of resting on the vagueness of general assertion.

POSTSCRIPT.

SINCE the foregoing sheets were printed, we have seen the Ordinance published by the Governor and Court of Policy of Demerara, in reluctant imitation of the Order in Council for Trinidad; in which, however, some of the most important clauses in that Order are wholly omitted, and others modified so as to deprive them of their value.—His Majesty's Government will, of course, not be satisfied with this partial and inadequate compliance with their instructions.